

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 XMB-02 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01

DOE-15 SOE-02 OES-09 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 EUR-12

/075 W

-----031826 152119Z /70

R 140830Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 709

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD

SUBJECT: U.S. COMMERCIAL COMPETITIVENESS

REF: (A) SINGAPORE 3041, (B) JAKARTA 9245

1. I WOULD LIKE TO ENDORSE AMBASSADOR MASTERS' COMMENTS PARA 4 REF B CONCERNING THE NEED FOR MORE AGGRESSIVE ASSISTANCE TO U.S. EXPORTERS. IT IS QUITE CLEAR FROM RECENT EXPERIENCE HERE THAT "UNQUESTIONED TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE AND A HISTORY OF PAST SUCCESSES" COMPRISE A SHAKY FOUNDATION FOR U.S. FIRMS' BUSINESS EFFORTS IN ASIA.

2. I FEAR THAT THE PRESENT COMPETITIVENESS OF U.S. ENGINEERING AND CONSULTING FIRMS IN ASIA MAY NOT LAST FOREVER IN THE FACE OF THE OPEN AND AGGRESSIVE SUPPORT OTHER GOVERNMENTS GIVE TO THEIR NATIONAL FIRMS. IT MUST BE KEPT IN MIND THAT (A) THE U.S. DOES NOT HAVE THE MONOPOLY ON HIGHER TECHNOLOGY IN MOST FIELDS THAT WE ENJOYED 15 YEARS AGO, AND (B) MOST LDC GOVERNMENTS AND PRIVATE COMPANIES DO NOT DEMAND BRILLIANT AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO ENGINEERING AND

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DESIGN PROBLEMS IF THE COST IS TOO HIGH. BY AND LARGE, THEY WANT ADEQUATE REMEDIES AT LOW COST. ONCE THE ENGINEERING AND CONSULTING FIRMS OF JAPAN AND CANADA--AND EVEN INDIA AND KOREA--ESTABLISH THEIR CREDENTIALS AS "ADEQUATE" ON GOVERNMENT SUBSIDIZED LOW BIDS, WE WILL BEGIN TO HEAR THE SAME OLD LITANY: "THE U.S. FIRM IS OBVIOUSLY THE BEST, BUT WE DON'T

WANT TO SPEND THAT MUCH MONEY."

3. USG SUPPORT, OF COURSE, IS NO PANACEA, BUT
THE ALTERNATIVES SEEM TO BE WORSE. THE PROSPECT FOR
ENFORCEABLE INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS TO CURB SUCH
SUBSIDIES DOES NOT SEEM BRIGHT, AND NO ACTION AT ALL WILL,
AS AMBASSADOR MASTERS POINTS OUT, CHANNEL FOLLOW-ON
PROCUREMENT TO COMPANIES WHO ARE FAMILIAR TO THE
CONSULTANTS.
INGRAHAM

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NNN

Message Attributes

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